



November 26, 1999

## Final Jurisdiction of Coastal Cutthroat Trout Under the U.S. Endangered Species Act

Dear Interested Parties:

This letter is to inform you that, except as indicated below, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will from this date be the agency with sole regulatory jurisdiction over all life forms of coastal cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki clarki*) under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA).

In the past, ESA jurisdiction over the coastal cutthroat trout has been shared by the USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). However, in a *Federal Register* notice published on April 5, 1999, the two agencies announced that they would decide which agency would have sole jurisdiction over the species. Sole jurisdiction is expected to provide a more expeditious means for dealing with ESA issues involving both resident and migratory forms of the species. Regardless, both agencies will continue to coordinate activities such as ESA Section 7 consultations and Habitat Conservation Plans involving watersheds shared by coastal cutthroat trout and salmonid species under NMFS jurisdiction (e.g., steelhead and chinook salmon).

There are presently two pending ESA determinations involving coastal cutthroat trout. The first is a proposed de-listing of Umpqua River cutthroat trout published on April 5, 1999. Because the original status review and listing decisions for this cutthroat population were conducted by NMFS, the final de-listing determination and associated regulatory responsibilities will be handled by NMFS, with FWS concurrence on any final de-listing determination. The second determination involves cutthroat trout populations in southwest Washington and the lower Columbia River currently proposed for listing under the ESA as threatened. The USFWS will assume sole responsibility over the final listing determination for these populations. This determination is expected by April 2000.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Barry Mulder at the USFWS, (503) 231-6179, or by calling Garth Griffin at NMFS at (503) 231-2005.

With regards,

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Northwest Region  
National Marine Fisheries Service

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